

#### FIRST SOVIET EXPERIMENT

for the Kurds in this area would be unthinkable in normal circumstances. By 1921 the movement collapsed, as the Ashkhabad Soviet showed less and less zeal in sponsoring it<sup>17</sup>

#### THE ROTHSTEIN MISSION

During the Soviet-Iranian negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty Leon Karakhan, Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, informed the Iranian government on November 28, 1920 of the appointment of Theodore A. Rothstein as Soviet envoy to Iran. This announcement was followed by an exchange of notes between Russia and Iran concerning the evacuation of Soviet troops, and on January 22, 1921, Karakhan made the Red Army evacuation dependent upon the evacuation of British troops. In the first quarter of that year British troops were moving out of Iran; hence when Rothstein arrived at the Iranian border in March, Soviet troops were virtually the only foreign ones stationed in large numbers on Iranian soil. Rothstein was stopped at the frontier. The Iranian government, headed by Seyyid Zia ed-Din, dispatched a telegram to Moscow, informing it that a diplomatic visa for the envoy would be issued only if Soviet troops were evacuated from Iran. Rothstein and Moscow protested, stating that the Iranian attitude violated the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of February 26, 1921. A deadlock resulted, and it was only on April 24 that Rothstein was permitted to proceed to Teheran.

Soon after his arrival Rothstein, a former editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, set up an elaborate apparatus of propaganda. Soviet films were distributed gratis to Teheran's movie theaters. A Russian school, which had previously existed in Teheran, was reopened and staffed

with Communist teachers. The press, however, became the object of Rothstein's special attentions. Receiving dispatches from Moscow through the short-wave receiving set at the Legation, the envoy distributed daily news communiques to Iranian papers. Under his influence a number of new papers and periodicals were started. Before Rothstein's arrival only two papers had been published in Teheran, *Iran* and *Ra'd* ("The Thunder"), the latter being the organ of Zia

17 A more detailed description of this episode is contained in Blacker, *op. cit.*, pp. 265 ff.